

Minutes of DAAC Meeting

Call to Order

Co-Chair Seren Derin called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Attendance

DAAC members present were Seren Derin, Co-Chair, Reginald Andrade, Bernadette Hait

Others present were Larry Shaffer, Town Manager; Mike Zlogar, Assistant Fire Chief; Carolyn Holstein, DAAC staff liaison, and members of the public Dana Goddard and Jane Gamache

Town Emergency Plan

Chair Derin listed the questions that the DAAC had about the Town's Emergency Plan from the February meeting. Assistant Fire Chief Mike Zlogar and Town Manager Larry Shaffer gave a description of how the Town operates in emergencies:

- First Aid kits are available for those in need. The State Office of Health (?) distributes them;
- The Town response depends of the area impacted and what the emergency is. Town officials trained in emergency response meet immediately and decide on the plan for the particular emergency. For example, and evacuation of a particular area of Town would involved the Fire, Police, DPW and Health Departments. A water breakage may involve just the DPW and Police to the area involved.
- The Town is working toward a database and resources needed – for example, who's impacted, transportation of people with special needs and contact with a hospital is important;
- The names of disabled can be registered with the Police Dept, and the dispatch center makes a note of the disability based on the person's address;
- Connect CTY (or "reverse 911") is now available in Amherst:
 - 1) It's a mass notification system as well as a specific area notification system;
 - 2) It has a registration field to identify special needs;
 - 3) A disabled person can call 911 and receive the needed services and transportation;
 - 4) CTY is tied to the Amherst GIS (Geographic Information System) and can identify the specific area of Town where the emergency is located;
 - 5) The program can make 8,850 phone calls in 25 seconds; it records who actually receives the call, and who received voice mail only;
 - 6) One can register on CTY at the Town website – www.amherstma.gov – which has a field for registering special circumstances;
 - 7) CTY has the ability to group phone numbers within a certain geographic location;
 - 8) It's a dynamic system, changes daily; citizens can remove extra phone numbers if they wish;
 - 9) For businesses with several phone numbers, every phone gets a call.
- Notice of an emergency will be put on the local television stations as well;
- Water treatment plans monitor the water quality at all times; a back-up treatment plant is available if needed;
- The Red Cross works with local communities and provides services (food, health) to shelters;
- UMass has an emergency plan for the campus that is separate but coordinated with the Town's;
- Students living off campus can use the Town shelters;

- In summary, The first two things that happens in an emergency is that the Town: 1) Marshals its resources (staff and equipment) and 2) Communicates with the citizens and the workers in the field;

Public Parking, Access Issues

The Town Manager focused on the memo written for him about parking problems in Town. The DAAC concerns about misuse of HP spaces in private parking lots, the too-narrow lift space for the HP spaces at the Boltwood garage area, and the crosswalk at the Jones Library were noted (see minutes of February, 2008 DAAC meeting).

Ms. Derin said that the committee needs a list of private lots where parking should be enforced.

Mr. Shaffer said that Claire McGinnis, Town Collector oversees all parking, including handicapped.

Mr. Shaffer said he would set up a meeting with the Police Chief, the DPW Superintendent and the DAAC staff to address the problems.

Bus Stops

Mr. Shaffer said that the Town had recently signed an agreement with UMass concerning bus service, and that UMass agreed to keep the bus stops along University Drive and Amity Street free of snow. The Town is now plowing Main and College Streets down to South East Street in order to help pedestrians also.

Ms. Holstein said that she contacted Al Byum at the University after the last DAAC meeting (and before the above mentioned recent agreement) and reminded him of the PVTa agreement to keep the bus-stops clear. He said that UMass PVTa is trying to keep the areas around bus stops clear.

Minutes

Minutes from the February meeting were available, but there was no quorum for discussion/approval. They will be discussed at the April DAAC meeting.

Visitability Ordinance

A warrant article for this Spring Town Meeting has been submitted asking that all new housing have an accessible entrance. However, Ms. Holstein reported that the Attorney General's office warned that such ordinances not covered in the State Building Code in Massachusetts are illegal.

Since "visitability" is an ordinance in other states, and since builders are often incorporating it into their building designs now, it could be soon that the State Building Code will require new construction to include accessible entrances (at least).

Meeting times

The committee agreed to change their meeting day and time to accommodate the Select Board liaison's schedule. In the future, the DAAC will meet on the **Third** Tuesday of the month at **3 PM**, Room 101 of the Bangs Community Center.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Holstein, staff liaison

Disability Access Advisory Committee
March 10, 2008
Glass Room, Bangs Community Center